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RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

From the Manuscripts of the Late Dr. Edgar.

EXPERIENCE in religion is something distinct from formality, and very opposite to hypocrisy; it is power accompanying form; it is reality and sincerity—not pretence. There may be bodily exercise in abundance, where there is none spiritual: God may be near to the mouth and far from the reins: he may be drawn nigh to with the mouth, and honoured with the lips, when the heart is far from him. With the mouth men may show much love, and yet their hearts be going after their covetousness. They may say, Lord, Lord, and not obey their master's precepts. Judah, the treacherous sister of Israel, was a stranger to repentance, when she turned to the Lord feignedly, and not with her whole heart. So were also the people of God in the wilderness; for though they returned and inquired early after him, remembered that he was their rock and their Redeemer, yet, they flattered him with their mouth, they lied unto him with their tongue; for their heart was not right with him.

They were treacherous hirelings who endeavoured to entrap the Saviour in his words, though they feigned themselves to be just men; and the Pharisees were notorious hypocrites, notwithstanding all their high pretensions to sanctity.

The experimental christian is a subject of the grace of God; the root of the matter is in him. If he characterizes the christian, the features of the character are found in himself. If he talks of religion, it is of something with which he is really acquainted. If he admonishes, his exhortation, as, says Paul to the Thessalonians, is not of deceit nor of guile. But experience in religion is something more than the simple possession of grace. It is that superior knowledge of our spiritual state and frame, and of spiritual things which is acquired

by time, by exercise, by trials. Every true believer is a partaker of the grace of God, but every one is not strong in faith. There are some who need to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God, who are unskilful in the word of righteousness, and who need milk, and not strong meat; but there are others of full age, who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. The experienced in religion have read and thought; they have looked into their own hearts, pondered their goings, tried their lives. They have been serious and solemn in meditation, importunate in prayer, careful and particular in examination. They have had enjoyments and privations; been lifted up and cast down; they have known the warfare of corruption against the workings of grace, and of the victory obtained through faith in the Lord Jesus; they have had fears and doubts, but they have known what it is to have fears dispelled and doubts solved; they have been in darkness, and they know what is meant by the hiding of God's countenance—but their darkness has been turned into light, and absence has been changed for fellowship with their Father, and his Son Jesus Christ; they have tasted the bitterness of sin, in grief for it, and hatred of it; but they have also tasted that the Lord is gracious; they have sat down under his shadow, and his fruit has been sweet to their taste; they are not ignorant of the devices of the tempter. A hard heart, wandering thoughts, carnality, the pleasures and profits, the smiles and the frowns of the world, have been a trouble to them; their purposes have been crossed, and their expectations disappointed; they have not lived without a share of the perplexities and troubles of life; but their tribulations have tended to the exercise of their patience, and the perfecting of their experience. From their trials, they have learned the genuineness of their faith, the sincerity of their hearts, the vanity and deceit of the world, the superior excellence of divine things, the love, power, wisdom, and faithfulness of God towards them, his care of them, and the seasonableness of that tender mercy, of which they stand so much in need. They have fallen and risen again; have gone astray, but have learned better to keep God's word. The partial successes of the temptations which have befallen them, of the deceitfulness of sin in them, its prevalence against them, and ascendancy over them have, put them doubly on their guard, excited their watchfulness, promoted their humility, and cautioned them not to be high-minded, but fear. New circumstances, in which they have been placed in the progress of life, and new events which have

occurred in their lot, have discovered failings in them which they knew not, and occasioned the action of corruption which before was dormant. They have been taught modesty and lowliness, as to their supposed christian accomplishments, and been cured of their mistaken confidence and spiritual pride: they have seen an end of all perfection, and been induced to exclaim, Who can understand his errors? and to pray, Cleanse me from secret faults, keep me back from presumptuous sins, do not let them have dominion over me.

Men of experience in religion have attainments superior to others—they have learned more and they know more; in understanding they are not children, but men. If they have not lived so long as others, they have been more exercised, have travelled faster and farther, and seen more in the divine life than others. They have superior acquaintance with its source, and the means of maintaining it amidst enemies, dangers, and hardships. They have enjoyed a larger share of its provision, and tasted more of its pleasures. They have been subject to more vicissitudes on their journey towards heaven than others, and, therefore, have learned more contentment, and attained a superior degree of steadiness, and uniform perseverance. They are the persons denominated in Scripture the strong, and are distinguished from those who are called weak. They are the vigorous young men and fathers, to whom John writes as possessing knowledge, strong and victorious; and he distinguishes them from little children, whom he characterizes merely as being in a gracious state, having their sins forgiven. They are the comparatively perfect characters, whom Paul addresses, when he says, Phil. iii. 15, Let as many as be perfect, be thus minded. He does not mean, however, to teach us that such characters are absolutely perfect, or that they have exalted notions of their own excellence, as though they had arrived at the acme of christian improvement. By the phrase, “let us be thus minded,” he calls and encourages to imitate his example in humility; and, sensible of remaining imperfections, to press on to higher attainments. “Not as though I had already attained,” says he, “either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Experience in religion is not enthusiasm in the bad sense of

the term. There are in it no wild gestures and ravings, as in the blind devotion of superstitious religionists. It is reasonable service. It has elevations and joys; but they are not the flash of warm passions, or the unmeaning ecstasies of a heated imagination. They are founded on knowledge; they are excited by the believing and rational improvement of the consolatory doctrines, the privileges, the promises, and the hopes of the gospel. Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Its joys are not fanciful raptures, in which the subject would be full instead of being emptied of himself. They are joys in God—in the perfections and providence of God—in salvation through his Son. Hence, the proclamation, “I bring you glad tidings of great joy, for to you is born a Saviour;” and the direction, “Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice;” and also the repeated declarations of David, “We will rejoice and be glad in thy salvation.” They are joys acknowledged as proceeding from God. *Thou* hast put more gladness into my heart—they have the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, as the agent who effects them; Christ, as their purchaser and promoter—“I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice;” and as a matter about which they are exercised, they have a well-grounded persuasion of union to Christ—of being justified and adopted, and having a solid hope of the enjoyment of eternal life. They are then spiritual joys, for they are wholly occupied about spiritual things; they tend to the increase of holiness, as is evident from their origin and subject. Religious experience has also depressions; but they can be accounted for on other grounds than constitutional melancholy, or hypochondriac affections. Experienced christians are in heaviness, through manifold temptations. The seeing of transgressors, the ungodly deeds of those who abound in iniquity, the low state of religion, the dishonour done to God, and injury to the cross of Christ, by professing christians, the remains of the body of death in themselves, the prevalence of sin against them, sufficiently account for their anxieties and grief, for their secret weeping, their groans, and their floods of tears. Experience in religion has its fellowship with God, but not in dreams and apparitions, in visions or extraordinary revelations; it is not by death-watches, or the croaking of ravens; it is not in sudden emotions, in convulsions of body, in distracted fits of a disordered mind. It is in receipt of favour from God, and in gratitude to him; it is in being constrained to live to Christ, as having died for sinners; it is in punctual observance of instituted ordinances, and in being

enabled faithfully to observe relative duties; it is in delighting in the law of God; in walking in all his ordinances and commandments—"The work of righteousness is peace, and the end thereof quietness and assurance for ever." The experienced in religion are not vain boasters. They do not proclaim with Jehu, "Come see my zeal for the Lord," or proudly say to a brother, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou." They are not heard to boast of their attainments, their interviews with God, their transports, their composure of spirit, their resignation to their lot, their piety or their perfection. If they glory, it is in the Lord, and as persons deeply in debt to his free and sovereign grace. "By the grace of God," each one of them says, "I am what I am." If they can do all things, it is through Christ strengthening them. If they are not a whit behind the chiefest, they yet account themselves nothing. Having received all the good they possess, they do not boast as though they had not received it, nor reckon themselves meritorious servants for having done their duty. As in other attainments they are eminent, so also in humility.

Religious experience, thus illustrated and thus guarded, is not an illusion; nor should the experienced christian be accounted a fanatic, or a pretender to what has no real existence. That the wicked, who have no changes, should consider him such, is not wonderful. Man believes according to his knowledge and feelings. The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. It may, therefore, be reasonably expected, that he will deny that of which he is ignorant, and which, in his darkness, he does not wish to know. That the mere formalist will ridicule christian experience as a vain fancy, may be expected. What conceptions can he have of being fervent in spirit, serving the Lord—of having all that is within him stirred up to magnify and bless his holy name. With similar mockery will the cool, the pretendedly rational, and philosophical professor, be disposed to treat the subject of christian experience. So dispassionate is he, so intelligent does he conceive himself to be, so high are his pretensions to rationality, that he will not give a place, nor an office in religion to the passions. He laughs at zeal, as if it were madness, and derides fervour in devotion as the effervescence of a weak and heated brain. By the opinions of such, however, our judgment on this subject is not to be guided. In addition to what has been said, much might be brought from Scripture, in evidence of the reality

christian experience. Strong must have been the faith of Abraham when he was tempted to offer up Isaac, and having received the promise, that in his seed all nations should be blessed, to offer up his only begotten son. Powerful must have been the impression on the mind of Jacob when he exclaimed, "How dreadful is this place: this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." What must have been David's experience, when his language at one time was, "Thy comforts delight my soul; my very heart and flesh cry out, O living God, for thee; as the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." How different the frame of Job, when he said, "O that I knew where I might find him;" and when he exclaimed, "O that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shined upon me." How sublime were the triumphs of Paul in saying, "I am ready to be bound, and to die at Jerusalem. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give." If knowledge of conversion, and certainty of heaven be fanatacism, then was Paul a fanatic; for he declares, "I know in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him till that day." "We know," says he, "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." If joy, even in the prospect of some of the worst evils of life, be a delusion, then was the prophet Habakkuk under its influence, for he says, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat: the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." If it were madness to choose affliction with God's people, rather than the pleasures of a wicked court, to take joyfully the spoiling of goods for the sake of Christ, to submit to imprisonment, torture, and death, in their worst forms, then must Moses, the patriarchal worthies, and the martyrs for truth, have been all deranged. If to fear and triumph, if to weep in wo, and sing and dance in joy, were fanatacism, then must David and Jeremiah, and Daniel and Job, and Paul, have been fanatics: but if, on the contrary, we take these and many others, whom time would fail to mention, as instances of sublime

mental powers, as well as of superior and spiritual exercises and engagements, then are they shining examples in evidence of the reality of religious experience.

EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS OF ROBERT HALL.

For elegant and specious declamation, I have no sort of talent. I must have a brief; I must have something like a fixed thesis, some proposition I wish to establish or illustrate, or I feel perfectly cold or indifferent. For my part, I let every man pursue his own plans:—how it is that I am doomed to be the perpetual object of advice, admonition, expostulation, &c. &c., as a writer, I know not. I am sure it does not arise from any proofs I have given of superior docility. I know myself so well as to be distinctly aware that importunities of this kind have always the effect of indisposing me to their object. I should have written more had I been urged less; and when the public ceases to dictate to me, I shall feel myself my own master.

Interruptions.—The greatest annoyance of my life for some years past, has arisen from my not being able to command my time, particularly in the morning; and could I be assured of my possessing this inestimable privilege, the poorest and most neglected village would possess the most inestimable charms for me. The afternoon and evening I have always been willing to abandon to the use of others; but to have no time I can call my own, to be liable to have the most precious hours of reading and meditation snatched from me, is an evil to one of my temperament almost insupportable.

Longing to be useful.—O my friend, what an infinity of time I have lost, and how ardently do I long to do something which shall convince the world I have not lived in vain! My wishes, in this respect will, it is to be feared, never be fulfilled. Tranquillity is not my lot. The prey, in early life, of passion and calamity, I am now perfectly devoured with an impatience to redeem time, and to be of some lasting benefit to the world, at least to the church.

Affliction universal.—Adversity is capricious in its times and seasons; but its visitations sooner or later never fail. In some it overwhelms the first hopes of life, so that they no sooner begin to taste felicity in prospect, than they are crossed with hopeless disappointment: others it permits to advance further,

waits till they spread the foundations of happiness deep and wide, that, just when they have nearly finished the superstructure, it may overwhelm them with a more extensive desolation. Some are racked with pains and agonies of body; and others are a prey to disappointed passions and blasted hopes, wasted with devouring regrets, and sick at heart with melancholy retrospects; wishing in vain they could arrest the wings of time, and put the current of life back. Of all these classes, every individual thinks his misfortune the greatest. For the same reason we are never at a loss to hear our own voice, be it ever so slender: the cry of a pierced heart sounds shrill in the solitary ear of the sufferer. Since we cannot essentially meliorate, let us endeavour to allay our anguish by moderating our expectations.

Simple earnestness in Preaching.—Were we but more strongly and abidingly impressed with the value of immortal souls, with what godly simplicity, what earnestness, and what irresistible pathos, should we address them! Perhaps the inequality of the effect produced by different preachers is to be ascribed more to the different degrees of benevolent and devotional feeling than to any other cause. Job Orton remarks, in his letters, that he knew a man of very slender abilities, who was eminently useful in the conversion of souls; which was, in his opinion, to be ascribed chiefly to the peculiarly solemn manner in which he was accustomed to speak of divine things.

The signs of approaching glory.—The prosperity of the kingdom of Christ is the most delightful object a real christian can contemplate. May he speedily take “upon himself his great power and reign.” I cannot but indulge the belief that real christianity is increasing in the world; and what we perceive of this kind at present is but the dawn of a more glorious era, which will shortly arrive. The convulsed state of the world, and the limitation of popish power, announce the speedy accomplishment of prophecy in the triumphant establishment of the kingdom of Christ. Wherever the Gospel is preached, there is a disposition unknown in former times, to attend upon it.

Trials sent in love to the soul.—I presume the Lord sees I require more hammering and hewing than almost any other stone that was ever selected for his spiritual building, and that is the secret reason of his dealings with me. Let me be broken into a thousand pieces, if I may but be made up again, and formed by his hands for purposes of his mercy. I see more and more of the unspeakable blessedness of being made like God, and becoming a partaker of his holiness. I see it,

I say, but I do not attain ; or, at least, in so unspeakably small a degree, that I have every reason to be abased, and “repent in dust and ashes.”

We cannot say of the past times that they were better than the present. I think the age is greatly improving ; it must improve in proportion as the grand catholicism is more universally applied.

REV. WILLIAM JAY.

MR. JAY, if I have been correctly informed, was born of very obscure parentage, in a town, the name of which I do not now recollect, not very remote from the place of his present residence. The earliest incident of his life that I ever heard, was his being taken up, and educated by the Rev. Cornelius Winter. This venerable man, as has been represented to me, was preaching before an association of ministers, and was particularly attracted by the uncommonly interesting and devout appearance of a little boy whom he observed in the congregation. This boy proved to be William Jay ; and Mr. Winter immediately resolved that, if Providence should seem to favour it, he would make an effort to bring him into the ministry. The boy was delighted with the proposal, and his parent readily consented to it ; and he was immediately taken into Mr. Winter's family, with a view to be trained for the sacred office. Winter is said to have regarded him with more than parental fondness ; and to have been impressed from the beginning with the conviction, that in educating this youth he was rendering a most important service to the church. Jay has fully reciprocated the warm attachment of his venerable friend and benefactor, and never speaks of him but with filial gratitude and veneration. I remember to have heard him say, that he had known but one man who had apparently so much of heavenly-mindedness as Mr. Winter, and that was John Newton. Mr. Jay began to preach while he was a mere boy ; for Robert Hall informed me that at the age of sixteen his popularity as a preacher was so great, that he was advertised in the public papers as “the prodigy.” At an early period he was settled in Bath, where he has remained, the pastor of a large and flourishing independent church, ever since. There is no minister of any denomination in that part of England, perhaps not in any part of it, who is equally popular, both in the established church and with dissenters ; and no one, I presume, who is so

often called from home to preach on special occasions.—He was a great favourite with Wilberforce, and Mrs. Hannah More, both of whom, at different periods, attended upon his ministry, and often expressed the highest admiration of his talents and character. The same admirable spirit of christian liberality, which pervades all his writings, comes out in every thing that he says and does; and I am sure that no christian, let his denomination be what it may, who is not bound hand and foot with the cords of bigotry, can hear him converse, without being strongly attracted towards him as a brother in the liberal and holy fellowship of the gospel.

The preparation which Mr. Jay makes for the pulpit is substantially the same with that of most of the English dissenters. He carefully arranges his thoughts, and writes a full outline, trusting to the suggestions of the moment for appropriate language. The sermon which I heard (and I had the pleasure of hearing *but* one) was of this character; but he spoke with such perfect correctness, that I could not imagine that the language could have been at all improved, if the discourse had been carefully written. His manner in the pulpit is altogether attractive. His person is dignified; his countenance singularly expressive, combining at once mildness and energy; his voice melodious and sufficiently commanding; his gesture natural and graceful, without the least attempt at parade; in short, I can conceive of nothing that is wanting to render him a fine model of public speaking. At the same time I ought to say, that neither the matter nor the manner of his preaching seemed to me adapted to awaken the strongest and deepest emotions: no one, I imagine, could hear him without being delighted and edified; and yet, I do not suppose he ever takes his audience up, and bears them away, as Robert Hall sometimes did, with the rapidity of a whirlwind and the majesty of a storm. The sermons which he has given to the public are, I understand, a fair specimen of his ordinary preaching; and I remember to have heard it remarked by one of his constant hearers, that his weekly lectures, on which he bestowed little or no effort in the way of preparation, were frequently of a much higher order than his sermons on the Sabbath. He is about sixty-three years old, has unusually vigorous health, and, for aught that appears, may retain his activity and usefulness for many years to come.

Few men can render themselves so interesting as Mr. Jay, in all the intercourse of life. His inventive mind, and fine spirit, and good humour, throw out a charm over his conversation, which every one feels who is privileged with his ac-

quaintance. You discover in his remarks in private, the same aptness of expression, and felicity of illustration, for which he is so much distinguished in the pulpit. For instance, to an inquiry which I made of him respecting the state of his family, he replied, that he had one child *with* Christ, three *in* Christ, and another *near* Christ. Speaking of hearing three sermons on the Sabbath, he remarked that they rather *battered* the mind than *impressed* it. He is exceedingly charitable in the judgments which he forms of others, and keeps you constantly impressed with the conviction, that while he is really a great man, he is utterly unconscious of it. It is hardly necessary to add, that his conversation, while it is uncommonly free from religious cant, exhibits a most familiar acquaintance with the word of God, and a deep and earnest piety. In short, I think I may say, with the consent of all who know him, that he is equally attractive as a man, exemplary as a christian, and engaging and eloquent as a preacher.—*Bib. Repertory.*

IDLE CHRISTIANS.

I HAD, very recently, the pleasure of meeting with a few friends, for the purpose of lending my aid towards the promotion of one of the noble institutions which adorn our native land, when I heard the expression used which stands at the head of this—Idle Christians; and I could not do otherwise than reflect upon it, as being very peculiar. Idle christians!—Who are they? How we should stare if we were to read or hear of drunken christians, swearing christians, dishonest christians—indeed, such an anomaly would not be allowed; and yet, I suppose, we must allow that there are such strange things in the true church as idle christians. How can we account for it? If I understand rightly, the name of christian implies a follower or disciple of Jesus Christ. Was he idle?—No; “He went about doing good.” He never wasted a moment—never lost one opportunity of rendering some good service—he laid himself out in acts of usefulness—he came to finish the work that his Father gave him to do, and he rested not until he could say, “it is finished.” Are not christians the followers of our Lord’s Apostles, who preached in his name, and who wrote the contents of the New Testament?—Were they idle christians; or do their doctrines encourage idleness? No; they were active, zealous, laborious followers of Christ, and all their doctrines teach us to redeem time, and to serve God

and his cause with holy fervency. Are the angels of heaven idle? "They fulfil his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word." They are always employed for the glory of God, and the good of the church of Christ. What, then, can be the reasons why any christians are idle? Is there not enough to do—are not men perishing by thousands—is there not room in the world for all to labour—is there not variety of employment to suit every taste? Surely! Then what can be the reason that there should be cause for complaining of idle christians? May I be permitted, in a few words, to suppose some reasons for idleness, and to endeavour to rouse such persons to activity? The present is a peculiar time for labour, for there is a great movement in the world, and all hands are wanted, which should make us dread to be found with "the unprofitable servant."

1. Perhaps you think that you can be of no service in the Lord's work. Have you *tried*? Have you earnestly entreated of God to show you in what your "talent" consists, and open a door for you into which you may enter, and endeavour to be useful?

2. Perhaps you are wondering what you could do. The Sabbath-school is open to you—the Bible Society is open to you—the distribution of tracts needs your aid—the sick chamber is open—the missionary field is open to you: choose ye which ye will serve.

3. Perhaps you have no heart for such work, and are too fond of ease; love your bed too well, and have not learned, like him, by whose name you are called, to rise before day, and retire for prayer; you have not learned to save a little time from meals, useless talk, gay dressing, or sauntering walks.

4. Perhaps you think that ministers alone are called to labour in the service of God; but this is a mistake, for all are to be the followers of Christ—all are "to do whatsoever their hand findeth to do"—all are to give an account of their stewardship, at last, and state what use they made of their "talent" on earth.

Oh, my friend! whether young or old, rich or poor, be assured that there is enough for you to do. Your own soul's salvation requires great vigilance, for Satan is watching for your destruction: the world, which lieth in the wicked one, needs your labour; the Lord hath need of you—why stand you all the day idle?—Look around you and see what you can do; ask yourself every morning, what can I do this day for God and souls? not forgetting to look up to the Holy Spirit to dispose you aright, to qualify you to perform the will of God from the heart.

This is no time for christians to be idle. The Lord is calling you to activity, in the many additional means which are in operation for the spread of the gospel. The call is loud and distinct, and it comes from him "whose voice once shook the earth." See that you obey it: for if you refuse him that speaketh, how shall you escape? "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, *always abounding in the work of the Lord*, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."—*American Paper.*

ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN?

L.—"AM I a christian? What an odd question. Sure we are all christians, and, thanks to God, we live in a christian land. Am I a christian? Well, there may be something in the question after all, and I should like to hear what you have to say on it, because the matter was never *put to me in the same way before.*" W.—"I shall feel happy in acceding to your request, only you must not be offended if I speak very plainly." L.—"Never fear; I have advanced so far as to feel convinced that *plainness* in religion is *honesty*, and, therefore, I shall receive what you have to say as, at least, well intended." W.—"I ask no more, but hasten to address to you some thoughts, which have often engaged my own mind on the all-interesting topics of *sin* and *salvation.*"

I. In questioning the genuineness of your christianity, I do not mean to class you with the open despisers of God's word and ordinances. You feel shocked, no doubt, when you hear men openly blaspheming the name of God, and pouring contempt on the revelation of his will. With such you would fear to associate, particularly if the intercourse would have the remotest tendency to encourage them in their godless career. Your heart recoils with horror from the imputation of belonging to a class who trample on every thing sacred, and for whom the word of God possesses *no charms, except* when it can be turned to the account of low jesting, or abominable sensuality. Even the more delicate and refined sporting with sacred things you "cannot away with:—it is iniquity," and such you are determined to esteem it. When characters of this stamp are spoken of, you are ready to exclaim with anxious solicitude—"My soul, come not thou into their secret;

unto their assembly, mine honour; be not thou united." I blame you not for this. Feelings of strong and unmingled disapprobation, when directed, not against persons, but against sinful courses, are right, and ought to be cherished and acted upon. Thus public morals would be in a healthier state; and the drunkard and debauchee, the profane swearer and liar, the dishonest and profligate, would receive less countenance in society. Do not imagine, however, because you do not belong to these classes of "wholesale transgressors," that you are therefore a believer in Christ, and walking in the way of holiness. The positive amount of the evil which you have done may not be so great as that which has been done by another, while your guilt is heavier, because your sins have been attended with greater aggravations. You have been brought up, it may be, under the care of parents fearing God; you have, from your earliest years, received a christian education; you have been taught to call God Father; —and can you think that He will pass lightly by your rebellious conduct, if still you spurn his authority. You are not enrolled among the daringly profane, but are you not sinning more grievously than they? Does not the heart of the father receive a deeper wound from the *undutiful look* of the child, than from the *bitter reproaches* of an enemy? In setting some of your sins in order before you, I have, therefore, no temptation to class you with the scoffer, or the profane; nor need I any other judge to pronounce on the evidence adduced, than the conscience which God has established in your own bosom. To it, and to your own experience I confidently appeal, for the truth of my statements and reasonings; and I hope and trust that, if you have neglected the salvation of your soul in time past, you will consider your ways, and turn to the Lord, who is still waiting to be gracious.

II. Attention to your *sins of thought*, and to their aggravations, may lead you to question the reality of your interest in Christ. You perhaps conjecture that I am treading on forbidden ground, when I allude to the inward sinfulness of your heart, or propose to bring to light what is concealed in the chambers of impenetrable darkness. I cannot search the heart. That is the province of God, and he claims it exclusively to himself. But are you not commanded to examine yourself; to reflect on the thoughts and affections of your soul?—and all that I propose is to assist the train of your reflections, while you are at perfect liberty to reject any statement, which you distinctly know to be inapplicable to your case.

You know God. You have, at least, heard of the Divine character, and of the solemn obligations under which you are placed, to love the Lord with "heart, and soul, and mind, and strength." Now, I ask you not, is this duty perfectly performed, but is it performed at all? In no sense, neither supremely nor subordinately, can you love any object without thinking on that object. To assert the contrary, is to assert downright nonsense. Universal experience contradicts it. Well, then, is God in any of your thoughts? Or is it not a melancholy fact, that from hour to hour, from day to day, and from week to week, time glides smoothly on, and your hearts forget God, till some public calamity, domestic trial, or personal affliction, forces you into the path of religious meditation? What is the true history of your experience from one Lord's day to another? In the morning you awake from the sleep of the night: God has protected you from the pestilence that walketh in darkness secretly, and you feel refreshed, and fitted for the duties of the day. Are your thoughts as you awake, directed to your Almighty Preserver, and do you lift up your heart in gratitude for his unfailing mercies? Was it so with you this morning; or to the charge of forgetting the Divine goodness, must you not plead guilty? And what of your thoughts during the day? How many frivolous and vain subjects gravely engage your attention, to the utter exclusion of God and his goodness, of Christ and his grace, of the Holy Spirit and his influences and operations. Oh! is it consistent with the revealed relations of time and eternity, with the importance of your soul's salvation—with your own hopes of immortality, and with the positive obligations resulting from the divine commandment, to remain as thoughtless of God, and as little engaged in the inward and mental service which He demands, as your conscience tells you that you are? "God is not in all their thoughts." In all whose thoughts? In all the thoughts of the wicked. Are you willing to sustain such a character? Well, am I persuaded you are not; and if you are not, the current of your thoughts must assuredly become more spiritual, and you must habitually cherish a sense of the presence of God, and of your dependance on him. He that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. The servant who knows his Lord's will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. *Are you then a Christian?*

III. Must I not question your christianity, when I consider your neglect of secret devotion. Here, also, the appeal lies to God and your own conscience, as this department of your

conduct is not directly cognizable by your fellow-men. Christian principle, in its first and earliest manifestations, will appear in the secret surrender of the heart to God. It was a token for good, respecting the great Apostle to the Gentiles, when the Lord said, "Behold, he prayeth." What character does any individual sustain in secret, and what is his exercise in the closet?—He is no more in the sight of God, however high may be his pretensions to christian sanctity before the world. There is such a thing as going through a certain round of ceremonial observance even in secret, while the heart and soul of religion are far away. One of the admonitions of Scripture says, "Take heed how ye hear." May I not apply a similar admonition to the service of God in secret devotion, and say—Take heed how ye pray? There is a *saying* of our prayers, morning and evening, which, it is to be apprehended, is little better than a solemn mockery. You assume the attitude of the suppliant; you utter certain words: but where is the deep abasement of soul in the presence of him who searches the heart and tries the reins—where is the lying low before the mercy-seat on high—where the unfeigned mourning over the estrangement of your heart from God—where the entire self-denial, which originates the confession, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,"—and where the eye of faith and hope directed to a crucified Saviour, and in the midst of darkness discovering a ray of heavenly light, beaming from the Sun of Righteousness? Are you conversant with these states of mind, these humbling exercises of soul, or are you an utter stranger to the power of religion in all the self-abasing forms, in which it is revealed? Burdened with sin, and pressed down with grief and affliction, do you come to the Father of Mercies, and pour the voice of your complaint into his listening ear? Alas! that such scenes should be so infrequent—that such glorious privileges should be so generally despised, and that against *you* such an accusation may be too well founded. Are you much in secret prayer, and do you pray heartily? Do you wrestle with God in prayer? When no eye but the eye of God sees you, do you read his word, call on his name, and meditate on your prospects of glory hereafter? If not, I ask again, with tender solicitude for your best interests, *Are you a Christian?* With so many incitements to this interesting branch of christian duty—so many rich promises of good, and so many awful threatenings of evil, if yet it be neglected, you must necessarily expose yourself to a fearful sentence of condemnation.

IV. If you are a parent, may not the genuineness of your christianity be questioned on the score of the neglect of family religion? Personal religion is certainly your first, and should be your earliest concern. Do I believe the testimony which God hath given of his Son? have I an individual interest in Christ? am I walking in the way of holiness?—are questions, compared to which, in real interest, the revolution of states and empires sinks into insignificance. It is the satisfactory practical solution of these, which alone can give you a sense of deliverance from the iniquities which have gone over your head as a heavy burden. But this is not all. Upon you, as the head of a family, important religious duties of a social character devolve, and to the discharge of these duties, you have acknowledged yourself bound by the strongest ties. Now, I put to you the simple question—are these duties performed, or are they neglected in your family? I take for granted you belong to a christian congregation, and attend public worship. I take for granted, also, that you are visited by your minister, and that, in such visitation, he asks you, “is the worship of God maintained in this family?” What answer does he receive? “*Indeed it's too much neglected.*” Is that your answer? If so, my experience of such things enables me to affirm, that you observe family worship, perhaps on the Sabbath evening, and perhaps not at all. You admit, at the same time, that it is matter of positive duty, but some excuse, which you acknowledge to be a *poor one*, prevents you from entering on it, and, in all probability, will continue to prevent you, till you drop into the grave, leaving a prayerless memory to your family and friends. If you neglect the worship of God to-day, shall you be more likely to observe it to-morrow? Why put off for a single hour what God has enjoined? The next morning may never dawn upon you, and, dying in the neglect of solemn and acknowledged duty, **HOW SHALL YOU MEET GOD?** The place you shall occupy on the left hand of the judge, the voice of conscience within, and the thunders of divine wrath all around, will *then* return a fearful answer to the question, “Are you a Christian?”

Christian fathers and mothers, you provide as God enables you for your children: will you not pray for them? Will you not go *with* them to the throne of grace, supplicating for those blessings which you all need? On this subject, I must speak out, and tell you plainly, that if your children be damned through your unchristian example, your doom will be awful!—No prayers in your families, morning nor evening! no voice

of praise ! no careful reading of the Holy Scriptures ; and, yet, you profess to be Christians ! Fathers and mothers, this conduct will not lead to a happy issue. Forsake it at once. "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer: thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here am I." "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

WICLIF.

QUESTIONS

To be asked and answered every day in the solitude of the closet.

1. Do I seriously regard religion as a subject in which I am individually interested ?

2. Am I more concerned to be indeed religious than to be regarded as religious ?

3. Do I really believe that I have an immortal soul, that I am a guilty, ruined and helpless sinner, and that if I live and die without being made a new creature in Christ Jesus, I shall assuredly be lost for ever ? And do I so believe these important truths as to be habitually influenced by them ?

4. Do I seriously and habitually study the Holy Bible as a book that God hath given to me ?

5. Am I willing to give up for Christ, every thing that the Bible or my conscience tells me that he does not approve ?

6. Have I sought and obtained a scriptural knowledge that Christ is my Saviour, and that, for his sake, my numerous sins are all forgiven ?

7. Do I indeed love Christ more than I love myself ? and do I really embrace him as my Teacher, my atoning Redeemer, and the director of all I do, and think, and say ?

8. Is the Sabbath a delight to me ; and am I careful never to be absent from my place in the house of God, either on that day or any other day when they that fear the Lord meet together ?

9. Do I act towards my children and all others of my household, as though I really believed that they have immortal souls ? Is the voice of prayer and thanksgiving daily heard in my tabernacle ? Do I regularly and believingly pour out my soul to God in the closet ? And do I, amidst the concerns of life, "pray without ceasing ?"

10. What influence has Religion upon my passions, my temper, and

the whole of my deportment? Is it such that men take knowledge of me that I have been with Jesus?

11. Do I watch against every sin, and especially that which most easily besets me?

12. Do I often examine myself with rigour and impartiality, recollecting the deceitfulness of my own heart?

13. By what motives am I influenced? Am I governed by principle, or am I actuated by views of expediency?

14. Am I a member of a Christian church? And if not, why not?

15. What are my views of the nature of a Christian church and the ordinances of Christ? And whence did I derive these views? From the teaching of men, or from devout and unprejudiced and personal study of the word of God?

16. How do I hear the word of God? As a knowing critic, or as a little child who desires to be taught?

17. If I am a church member, how do I discharge my duties as such? Do I seek the benefit of others more than my own gratification? Am I useful? Am I zealous? Am I indeed willing to occupy the lowest seat? Am I altogether free from the crying sin of trampling on the wishes and privileges of poor members, because I am better circumstanced than they?

18. How do I act towards him who ministers to me in word and doctrine? Do I habitually pray for him that he may be made a blessing to me and to others, and do I do nothing that may possibly prevent his being so? Do I anticipate his wants and contribute towards his support to the utmost of my ability? Or do I love my money, covet a cheap ministry, and give no more than decency requires?

19. Do I really believe, and love to hear faithfully and fully preached, the doctrines which I publicly profess?

20. Am I deeply concerned for the salvation of others, whether far off or near at hand? And, if so, do I give evidence of it by being "ready to every good word and work?" And, are the efforts I make for their benefit so large and so many as not to admit of any addition?

21. Do I realize the fact, that nothing I have is my own: and that being only the Lord's steward of all that I possess, I act unrighteously if I hesitate to employ it for Him?

22. Do I do all things to the glory of God, and to the glory of God alone?

23. Do the vast concerns of eternity occupy my supreme attention?

24. Am I at this moment prepared to die; and do I now rejoice in prospect of the second coming of Christ?

CHRISTIAN'S MOTTO.

"**APT to teach**" should be the motto of every christian's heart in all that he says and does in life. It is a short text, but no small one. It is full of meaning. It extends all through life's duties. It touches all our words—should have a place in all our acts—should be in every christian duty whether public or private.

1. By our words, in letting them be such as becometh the gospel of Christ, i. e. our words be few—touching the point—designed to do good—seasoned with grace—calculated to instruct, admonish, and reprove, both in private and public.—Now if the christian labours daily to gather fruit, he will have something new to talk about; and in doing this he should study to be "apt to teach." It is to be regretted that aptness to teach things both new and old is so little studied by preachers and members of churches, that meetings for worship become uninteresting.

2. To be apt to teach by our acts is the only successful way of fulfilling the Saviour's command: "Let your light so shine that men, seeing your good works, may be led to glorify God."

I have been instructed by a fact once related to me by a brother. A certain poor man was sick in the neighbourhood of a deacon, who visited him, laboured with him a long time about his soul, and left him without saying anything for the body. Soon after a young man went to visit him, and give him a dollar. The effect was such that the poor man was led to seek his soul's salvation. "Ah," said the sick man, "deacon—— came here, laboured for the soul, but said nothing about the body—but this young man's dollar led me to think of God's goodness."

3. By the improvement of all proper circumstances and privileges to us and others, we should be apt to teach. Whoever has observed his own feelings in various situations, has discovered quite a difference in being instructed beneficially or usefully. The light and vain are found in adversity to have ears, eyes, and taste, for more serious things. The christian should seek such times, and be "apt to teach" them. However good our instruction, if not suited to their state, it will not be found fully "apt to teach" to the doing of good. The christian should be like the smith—strike while the iron is hot—then he will be "apt to teach" others successfully. I am inclined to think public speakers are not fully "apt to teach" as they ought to be. If they were, the word would take more effect;

for the promise is, "it shall not return unto me void."

And I think the most important of all is, to teach in a proper spirit," "speaking the truth in love," "in the holy "Ghost," or spirit of Christ or God. The truth in love is "apt to teach"—like apples of gold in pictures of silver—beautiful to behold—impressive to the hearer—carrying conviction with it, not too easily forgotten. O christians, look close—"try the spirit," see whether of self, or of what sort it is: for, as a general rule, the spirit you possess when you speak to others, is found to possess them more or less. The hardest heart will melt before the truth in love.—*Morning Star*.

CHIEF ROMISH HERESIES.

1. *Restrictions in reading the Holy Scriptures.*—The Council of Trent, in 1546, decreed, "That no one, confiding in his own judgment, shall dare to bend the Scriptures to his own sense of them, contrary to that which is given, or has been given, by the holy mother church, whose right it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures; or contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers, though such interpretations should never be published. Those who oppose shall be denounced by the ordinaries, and subjected to the punishment of the law." And in the "Rules" of the Index of Prohibited Books, which received the Papal sanction by a bull, dated March 24th, 1564, and are constantly prefixed to the Indexes themselves, (one of which, printed at Rome 1787, now lies before me,) the fourth rule is thus expressed: "Inasmuch as it is manifest from experience, that if the Holy Bible, translated into the vulgar tongue, be indiscriminately allowed to every one, the temerity of men will cause more evil than good to arise from it; it is on this point referred to the judgment of the Bishops, or inquisitors, who may, by the advice of the Priest or Confessor, permit the reading of the Bible, translated in the vulgar tongue by Catholic authors, to those persons whose faith and piety, they apprehended, will be augmented, and not injured by it: and this permission they must have in writing. But if any one shall have the presumption to read or possess it without such written permission, he shall not receive absolution until he have first delivered up such Bible to the ordinary." In 1757, the following addition

was made to this Rule, by the "Congregation of the Index," with the approbation of Pope Clement VIII:—"Any versions of the Bible in the vulgar tongue are permitted, that are approved by the Holy See, or published with Notes taken from The Fathers of the Church, or from learned and Catholic writers."

2. *Tradition.*—The Council of Trent, in its fourth session, decreed, that "if any one, knowing the unwritten traditions of the Fathers, industriously contemned them, he should be anathema or cursed." Very different is the language of Scripture, which presents Christ to us as addressing the Scribes and Pharisees, those determined advocates of unwritten traditions, and solemnly declaring, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine of the commandments of men:" (Matt. xv. 9 :) And again, (Mark vii. 8,) "Laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men." We may therefore say with St. Jerom, "The Sword of God" (that is, his Word) "doth smite those other things which they find and hold of their own accord, as by apostolical tradition, without the authority and testimony of Scripture." (In cap. i. Aggæi.)

3. *Invocation of Saints.*—By the Council of Trent, "all Bishops, and others that have the charge and care of teaching," are commanded "diligently to instruct the people, concerning the intercession and invocation of Saints; teaching them, that the Saints, reigning together with Christ, offer up their prayers to God for men: that it is good and profitable humbly to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers, helps, and assistance, for the imploring of benefits from God by his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is our alone Saviour and Redeemer."

4. *Service is an unknown tongue.*—The 9th canon of the 22d session of the Council of Trent declares, "If any man shall say, that the mass ought only to be celebrated in the vulgar tongue, let him be accursed."

5. *Transubstantiation.*—With regard to this strange doctrine, the Council of Trent in its twelfth session in 1551, decreed, "If any one shall deny, That the Body and Blood, together with the Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore the whole Christ, are really, truly, and substantially contained in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist; but shall affirm that he is there only as in a sign, or figure, or by his influence; let him be anathema." Other similar canons were also framed at the same time, among which is one to this effect: "If any one shall deny that the whole Christ is con-

tained in each element, or species in the adorable sacrament of of the Eucharist ; or shall deny that if separated into parts, the whole Christ is contained in separate parts of each element or species : let him be anathema or accursed."

6. *The sacrifice of the Mass*, is intimately connected with the doctrine of Transubstantiation. The Council of Trent asserts, that in the sacrifice of the mass, "the very same Christ is contained and sacrificed without bloodshed, who once offered himself up by a bloody death upon the altar of the cross;" and remarks, "that such sacrifice is really propitiatory; and by means thereof, if we, being humble and penitent, come unto God with a true heart, a right faith, with fear and reverence, we shall obtain mercy and find favour in him seasonably helping; because by the oblation thereof, the appeased God, granting grace and the gift of penitence, remits crimes, nay, even grievous sins; for it is one and the same host and oblation, the same person now offering himself in the ministry of the Priests, that then offered himself up upon the Cross, the manner only of the offering being different."

7. *The celibacy of the Clergy*.—By the Council of Lateran it is ordained, "That those who are married shall not be admitted into holy orders; that those that are admitted shall not be allowed to marry; and that those who being admitted, do marry, shall be separated." And the Council of Trent decreed, "That if any one shall say, the Clergymen in orders, or professed regulars, may marry, and their marriage be valid, notwithstanding any ecclesiastical law or vow, and that the contrary is nothing else but a condemning of matrimony; and that all those who find they have not the gift of chastity, although they have vowed it, may marry; he shall be accursed."

Such is Popery, antisciptural, absurd, immoral—Satan's great masterwork; and yet through man's wickedness it reigns, and prospers; and in poor Ireland, counts, by millions, its blinded votaries!

"A Swede is rarely found who is unmindful of his religion; and as he does not 'bow down to stocks and stones,' and painted images and pictures, and wooden dolls and wafers, so his principles are purer and his heart is more upright. We found the natives every where characterized by a mild and peaceable disposition, without the smallest propensity to imposition or theft."

REVIEW.

Letters on the Divine Origin and Authority of the Holy Scriptures, by the REV. JAMES CARLILE, Junior Minister of the Scots Church, in Mary's Abbey, (Capel-Street,) Dublin, in two volumes, 12mo. London. B. Fellowes.

BISHOP Butler, in the advertisement to his "Analogy of Religion," says, "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that *Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry*; but that it is now, at length, discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it, as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained, but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world." Nearly a century has passed away since these sentiments were penned, and during that period a mighty revolution has taken place in the public mind. Infidelity mustered her forces, and took the field with a courage worthy of a better cause; she has been routed and driven from the positions, which, in her pride and scorn, she fancied to be impregnable. The writings of Butler, distinguished as they are by depth of thought and sound logical discussion, gave a powerful check to the progress of infidel principles, in Britain: the whole tribe of *free-thinkers* (it should rather be *free-livers*) looked aghast when such a giant threw himself across their path; conscious cowardice instructed them to avoid grappling with an antagonist of Butler's intellectual nerve. This was their wisdom; and, indeed, it must be acknowledged, on all hands, that infidels are more forward to take for granted the falsehood of christianity, than to prove it false. All would be well, on their side, could they persuade the world that the religion of the Bible "is not so much as a subject of inquiry." What is the whole of Hume's ingenious Essay on Miracles, but a puny attempt to make people reject the Word of God, "*without farther examination.*" Here is a man, emancipated from all vulgar errors and prejudices!—a free-thinker!—a philosopher!—and yet, instead of encouraging his readers to sift evidence, to indulge in "fearless free inquiry," to subject to rigorous scrutiny any alleged instance of miraculous interposition, he advises them to reject it, "without farther examination!" Shame on the philosophy that would prop itself up on narrow bigotry and preju-

dice, and thrive at the expense of smothering open and manly investigation. Let infidels defend their cause, if they can: let them furnish something deserving the name of an *Answer* to any one of the standard works written against them, if they are able; but let them not flatter themselves that they shall be able to put down christianity, by calling upon the world to reject it without inquiry. The world will have sagacity enough to discover that the men who make such a proposal, sensible of the weakness of their cause, and actuated by a dastardly spirit, are labouring to substitute pure infidel malevolence for lack of argument. We say, in the language of an inspired apostle, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

We are the friends of free inquiry. We call upon men of all classes, and especially do we call upon christians, to investigate with the utmost strictness, the evidences of divine revelation. The Bible will not suffer under the most rigorous scrutiny; weighed in the balances of sound reason, weighed by an unprejudiced mind, it will never be found wanting. Friendly to the scriptures—devotedly attached to them, we cannot be enemies to free enquiry; for we know how eminently it has served the cause of revealed truth in the world. We wish christians to be better acquainted with the solid basis on which their faith in the word of God rests; and we feel convinced, that the more they study the subject, under the divine blessing, the stronger and the more influential will be the persuasion resting upon their minds, that the Bible is "no cunningly devised fable," but that it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God to every one that believeth, whether Jew or Gentile. "Search the scriptures."

Mr. Carlile's Letters are admirable. Part of them appeared, some years since, in the pages of the "*Dublin Christian Instructor*," addressed to the Author's sisters. The same form and style of composition are still retained, and, we think, with obvious advantage. But our limits, we regret, do not permit us to enter so fully into the merits of these interesting volumes, as we could desire. The author evinces, throughout, that originality, that ardent love of truth, and that genuine attachment to the holy scriptures, for which, as an able minister of the New Testament, and a powerful defender* of the Orthodox

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* We allude particularly to Mr. Carlile's work, entitled, "Jesus Christ, the Great God, our Saviour," containing a reply to a cavalier, half-poetical pamphlet, against the supreme Divinity of Christ—by Doctor Drummond, of Dublin.

faith, he has ever been distinguished. We should rejoice to find these "Letters" in the hands of every christian, and particularly of every student of divinity in the United Kingdom; they contain a treasure of facts and statements, well arranged, and their extensive dissemination would prove eminently serviceable to the cause of "pure and undefiled religion." The *eighth* letter of Vol. I., furnishes a triumphant exposure of one of the latest efforts of infidelity. The effort was made in answer to a challenge to infidels, published by his Grace, the present Archbishop of Dublin, in his excellent work upon Logic; calling on them to account on rational principles, for the rise and spread of christianity, seeing, they think proper to reject the account given in the New Testament.

We present our readers with a pretty lengthened extract from Letter I., on the "*General View of the Argument,*" which will show them the author's plan, and at the same time afford a specimen of the excellence of the work:—

"The usual mode of treating the evidences of the truth of Christianity, is, first to prove that miracles were really performed at the introduction of Christianity, and especially that Jesus really was put to death, and that he rose again from the dead. These points are usually established by reference to ancient writers, some of them Christians, others Pagans; the genuineness of the books of the New Testament as the productions of the writers whose names they bear, is then established by the concurring testimony of antiquity; the perfect competency of these authors, and the total absence of motives to falsehood, are next adverted to: and the religion of the New Testament being thus established, the authority of the New is employed to establish that of the Old Testament.

"Thus, for example, Grotius commences his evidences of the truth of Christianity, by proposing to prove that such a person as Jesus lived and suffered an ignominious death; a point which, he says, is established by the testimony, not only of Christians, but of Jews and Pagans; mentioning particularly, Suetonius, Tacitus, and Pliny the younger. He then proceeds to other similar propositions, which he proves by the same method.

"Addison commences his evidences by showing that much mention is not to be expected of the transactions in Judea, respecting the introduction of Christianity by cotemporary writers; but that such mention is made of them as might be expected. To the Pagan he adds Jewish writers, and then Christian writers, justifying the principles on which he adduces the testimony of these latter witnesses.

"The first proposition which Paley proposes to establish is, that there is satisfactory evidence that many, professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct. This proposition that learned and

acute writer proceeds to prove, first from the nature of the case, then by the testimony of Pagan writers. He then adduces the indirect evidence for the truth of the proposition which is to be found in the New Testament, and follows up this by the direct testimony of Christian writers. He then goes on to prove the authority of the historical books of the New Testament, as having been written by the persons to whom they are attributed. Having by these and similar arguments established his first proposition, he passes to his second, which is, "that there is not satisfactory evidence that persons pretending to be original witnesses of any other similar miracles, have acted in the same manner, in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of the truth of those accounts." And this proposition he illustrates by reference to particular alleged instances.

"Dr. Chalmers, in his evidences, confines himself almost exclusively to the historical evidences of the truth of the New Testament. He commences with proving that the books of the New Testament were written by the persons to whom they are ascribed; and this point he proves by the testimony of other writers, friends and enemies to Christianity. He then adduces certain internal marks of truth that may be traced in the sacred narrative, and follows up these with the testimony of subsequent writers. When he touches upon the internal evidence, he treats it merely as it regards indications of candour and honesty in the writers of the New Testament, and expressly disclaims all support from any other internal evidence, as tending rather to weaken the argument than to strengthen it.

"Most of these writers add to their principal arguments some observations on the fulfilment of prophecy, on the morality of the Gospel, &c. Paley particularly adverts to several such topics; but treats them only as auxiliaries to his main argument.

"Now, without casting a shadow of doubt on the conclusiveness of the historical or external evidence to the truth of Christianity, I confess, it appears to me to be meagre and limited, in comparison with what might be expected to be produced for the genuineness of any work of God. One might have, *a priori*, expected that, altogether independently of any human testimony, a book which has God for its author, would have stood forth perfectly unique amongst all other books, transcendently superior to them all; and thus, as evidently the workmanship of God, as a living man among an assemblage of statues or automata.

"My objection to these trains of argument which I have described, is not to their conclusiveness, but to their being represented as the chief leading evidence for the inspiration of Scripture. I believe them to be conclusive so far as they go; but I cannot consent to their being laid at the very foundation of our faith, so as to convey the idea, that if certain uninspired authors had never written, or if their writings had not come down to us, the evidences of the truth of Christianity would have been materially affected.

"There is one remarkable feature in all these treatises on the evidences of Christianity, which I have noticed, which is, that not one of them takes up the book of God as a whole, and contemplates it as it is put into our hands, from the book of Genesis to the Apocalypse; all of them confine themselves to the New Testament history. Paley indeed protests against involving the New Testament in the question

of the inspiration of the Old Testament. He says that the testimony of the New Testament furnishes a strong confirmation to the Jewish Scriptures, but asserts that the evidence of the truth of the New Testament stands altogether 'independent of that of the Old Testament. Nay, he goes so far as to assert, that the quotations from the Old Testament, by the New Testament writers, are not to be regarded as proving any thing more than that the books of the Old Testament existed in their days. Dr. Chalmers leaves the subject of the inspiration of the Old Testament untouched. Nay, he asserts that objections brought against the Old Testament do not in the slightest degree affect the New Testament.

"I cannot accede to the opinion of these able reasoners. The books of the Old Testament are quoted by the New Testament writers as divinely inspired: and, most unquestionably, if it could be proved that the books of the Old Testament are not divinely inspired, that fact would, at the same time, prove that the books of the New Testament are not divinely inspired. For the Holy Spirit never could declare books to be inspired which were forgeries pretending to inspiration.

"In the following letters, therefore, I shall view the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as one book, consisting of a historical narrative, commencing with the creation of the world, and ending with the arrival and residence of the Apostle Paul in Rome, having certain doctrines respecting spiritual things connected with it; these doctrines being conveyed partly in the course of the narrative, and partly by certain other books appended to the narrative: and my object will be to prove that this whole book, as it stands, is of God. In consequence of the much pains that have been bestowed by many able men to set forth the testimonies of uninspired writers to the truth of the New Testament, I shall not dwell at much length on that part of the argument, but content myself with referring to those authors who have handled it fully. I would not, however, be understood as by any means undervaluing such testimonies. I wish merely to assign to them the station that properly belongs to them in the general argument. God has provided for us confirmations of the truth, sometimes from the lips of his enemies, and, therefore, we are not to overlook them; but we are to take care to keep them in their proper place. The just light in which they ought to be viewed is simply phenomena to be accounted for. We find certain passages in ancient writings; we ask how these passages came to be in such writings? We give our solution,—that they are the natural consequences of the truth of the Scripture narrative; and we challenge the world to furnish any other reasonable solution. We present the Bible, with all its internal and external evidences of truth and of divine workmanship; we show that the very existence of such a book, so circumstanced, indicates the interposition of divine wisdom and power to bring it into existence; and we call upon those who are not satisfied with our account of the phenomena which we adduce, to furnish some other account to them.

"If any man deny that the earth or the sun, was created by an omnipotent, omniscient God, the question is instantly put to him, 'How, then, did they come into existence?' And the answer which he feels himself constrained to give to this question, at once exposes the absurdity of his imaginations. Now, why should not the argu-

ment for the divine inspiration of the Bible be placed on the same footing? We would say to the infidel, 'Here is the Bible; a book thus and thus constructed, and accompanied by such and such confirmations; we hold that such a book could not have existed without the special, miraculous interposition of the Deity; and we challenge you to show how it could have come into existence without that interposition. Take the range of the whole world, and the history of all ages, and say, if you can, when, or by whom, such a book could have been contrived or executed.' I am persuaded that a few attempts to answer this plain question would do more to expose the fallacies upon which the infidel rests his rejection of the Scriptures, than the most elaborate arguments in defence of them."

THE CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPIST'S COMPANION.

Published in Glasgow, by Mr. D. Nasmith. Sold in Belfast, by Mr. H. Rea, 17, Waring-street.

WE have been often disappointed with religious periodicals. We had formed high expectations of the usefulness of the work, from the talent and the tone of the usual harbinger—the *Prospectus*. Our hopes were soon gone. Instead of truth, we too often found lies—instead of liberality, sectarianism—instead of open, manly statements, low, ungenerous insinuations. We were tempted never to recommend, *ex cathreda*, any periodical as a whole—never, we mean, to speak favourably of any numbers, except those which had passed under our own review. When, however, a well known christian comes before the public as the avowed editor of a religious journal—when we have full confidence in his christian character; and when that character is *publicly* identified with the journal he conducts, then we can consistently recommend the work while under his guidance.

Such are our feelings of the small, but valuable periodical, which we now introduce to the attention of our readers. We know the editor, and we esteem him. In "works of faith and labours of love," he has honoured his GOD and SAVIOUR, and GOD has honoured him, by making him useful. The present effort to be useful is deserving of general encouragement. The design of the "Companion" is important—the arrangement admirable—the doctrines it advocates strictly Evangelical—the information it conveys highly interesting, and the moral tendency of the work, as a whole, is to promote "peace and prosperity" in all the palaces of Zion. We sincerely wish all possible success to this cheap and valuable journal: and our readers

may know our opinion of its worth, when we express a wish, that each of them could frequently converse with the "*Christian Philanthropist's Companion*."

The editor of the "*Companion*" is engaged in publishing a series of very valuable tracts, which he very appropriately calls "*Revival Tracts*." We have seen several of them, and we consider them likely to be extremely useful. He has also opened a

CHRISTIAN AND PHILANTHROPIC AGENCY HOUSE,
14, *Buchanan-street, Glasgow.*

"This house was opened on the 1st of June, 1833, by David Nasmith, as a place of business for Religious and Philanthropic Individuals and Societies. It comprises two Offices, three Committee Rooms, and a Reading Room, with other apartments yet unappropriated. At one of these Offices, Young Men, of good character, from the country or other Towns, may be directed to suitable lodgings, and introduced to the Glasgow Young Men's Society for Moral and Intellectual improvement; and such as want Situations may be registered. The Reading Room is furnished with five American, two English, and three Scottish Newspapers—all religious, except two that are local; and about twenty-five Reviews, and other Periodicals, with a variety of other works—Charge, 10s. 6d. per annum. Mr. Nasmith intends making a selection of two or more departments, to which he will more especially direct his personal efforts; and by suitable agency, will, under his own superintendence, provide for the performance of such other business as may be entrusted to him. He has made arrangements for recording the proceedings of Meetings, filling up and delivering Notices, issuing Reports, Circulars, and Periodicals, collecting Subscriptions, receiving Contributions for various objects, &c.

He will be most happy, by any means in his power, to forward the views of Christians of evangelical sentiments, who may wish to make themselves useful as City Missionaries, Tract Distributors, Sabbath-school Teachers, or otherwise, and to introduce Young Men, of good character, to the Young Men's Societies of Glasgow, or other Towns of Scotland, Ireland, France, or America, in which he had the satisfaction of seeing such Societies formed. All communications on such subjects to be post paid.

"Having travelled somewhat extensively in Europe and America, and having been honoured to be long and successfully

employed in devising and executing plans of usefulness, he hopes, by steady and persevering application to business, under the Divine blessing, to be enabled to give satisfaction to those Individuals or Societies, in this or other Countries, who may be pleased to employ him as their Agent."

The "liberal soul" of our friend who edits these papers, and conducts this useful establishment, has devised "liberal things:" may he find that "by liberal things it shall stand!"

SECESSION CHURCH.—No. II.

(For the *Christian Freeman*.)

A SCRIPTURAL CHURCH—DIFFERENT DEGREES AND PERIODS OF REFORMATION—ORIGIN OF THE SECESSION.

THE Bible recognises a visible association of persons, called the Church. To this Church is given a Ministry.—1 Cor. xii. 28. And God hath set some in the Church—first, Apostles; secondly, Prophets; thirdly, Teachers. We are told, Eph. iv. 12-13, that these were given for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry—for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man; unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

To the Church, when confined to the kingdom of Israel, God gave an account of himself, and of his wonderful doings in providence; appointed ordinances to be observed, and prescribed laws for the regulation of his people's conduct. Psalm lxxviii. 5, 6, 7—"For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make known to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God; but keep his commandments." The members of this church, then, were united in this knowledge and belief of the record which God gave of himself—in observing his ordinances, and walking according to his laws. In the utmost defection of this church, reformation could have been effected by carefully examining the revealed pattern, and regulating the society anew, according to the direction first given by God.

In the New Testament Church, there are truths to be known and believed, called, "The Faith once delivered to the Saints"—ordinances to be observed, and laws by which Christ's disciples are to be guided. The command is, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." They who believed this gospel, observed the Sacraments, and obeyed the laws of Christ, were truly members of the Church.

When the great body of those who called themselves by the name of Christ, despised the simple doctrines of his religion, and put in their place the commandments of men; and for the rules of His worship, substituted human inventions, Antichrist was come; and it was necessary to turn again to the testimony of a Saviour, and, by

it, frame anew the Christian Church. As the New Testament remained, this was easily done. Luther took the Bible as his rule, neglecting Popes, and Councils; and in it he found the Faith, pure as it came from Heaven, which ought to be maintained by all the members of a true church. Calvin, and the other lights of the Reformation, followed in the same holy work, till, by their combined exertions, directed by the Spirit from on high, the Churches of the Reformation stood forth under various degrees of scriptural attainments.

Calvin agreed with Luther, generally, in the doctrines which he taught; but he reformed the government and discipline of the Church after a different model. He conceived that the Scriptures exhibit an equality of authority among the teachers of religion, and taught, that each congregation ought to be ruled by a number of Elders; one or more of whom might be preaching Elders, and that in the Church, there ought to be higher courts, to which appeals from the lower might be made. Calvin, taking these views, established at Geneva a Presbyterian Church.

After the example of the Reformation effected by Calvin, was the Church of Scotland reformed. She attained her highest purity in the seventeenth century; when she kept in practical operation, the Doctrine, Government, and Discipline, described in the Westminster Confession of Faith. One part of her reformation consisted in giving to the christian people, the choice of their Rulers and Teachers. In the beginning of the last century, the State withdrew this right from the people of the Presbyterian Established Church of Scotland, and a majority in the General Assembly willingly submitted to the robbery. A number of ministers protested against it. At the same period, some ministers taught Arian sentiments, and, in other respects, directly opposed the Church's public Confession. These were permitted by the majority, to follow their own course with little censure. Several ministers again protested against these evils, both before the court, and in their public preaching. The Assembly condemned a book, entitled, the "*Marrow of Modern Divinity*," which contains a good defence of the doctrines of grace—the doctrines of their own Confession. In this condemnation, Arminian sentiments are taught in some parts; in others, the opposite extreme is dwelt upon, and antinomian tenets warmly urged. The friends of the Church's attainments, again remonstrated, and warned her to stand by her own Constitution and Confession. In reply to this remonstrance and warning, the Assembly refused to allow protests to be entered in their records, and commanded ministers not to testify against these transactions in their public teaching.

What was to be done by those true reformed Presbyterians, who loved the profession of the Scottish Church. Patronage was retained—error protected—the Church refused to conform to her own Standards—opposition to defection was forbidden within the Church—the friends of truth were shut up to the necessity of going out from the Courts and Communion of the Established Church, and taking with them the old pure profession, which they received from their reforming fathers; and, in the character of Dissenters, to maintain, and transmit, this profession to future generations. This course was pursued by the first Seceding ministers, four in number. Ebenezer Erskine of Stirling, Alexander Moncrieff of Abernethy, William Wilson of Perth, and James Fisher of Kinclaven, did, on the 16th

of November, 1733, protest against a sentence of the Commission; and declined the authority of the General Assembly. From the party, who were going on in defection, they *Seceded*, but from the Doctrine, Government, and Discipline contained in the Standards of the Church, they *did not secede*—they did not depart. These they held firmly; and transmitted them to their descendants in greater purity than they could have done by continuing in the corrupt Established Church.

When your readers peruse this short article, I recommend them to read over again, before the next Month, the paper entitled, "The Secession Church," in your 8th Number for last year, page 287. That article will furnish additional and very interesting information respecting the Rise of the Secession.

J. K.

November 16th, 1833.

CAUSE OF MISSIONS.

IN your number for August, there is a well written article on the question, "What can I do?"

Now, what I wish is, that you would urge the question, What can I do? by applying it to the missionary cause, on every class of your readers. As farmers are the most numerous class of your readers, request each to ask himself, What can I do?

If, in the good providence of God, our lot is cast in a land flowing, as it were, with milk and honey, and if he has prospered, and not blasted, the fruits of our fields, should not gratitude to him who is the well-spring of all our comforts—should not duty, and love, lead us to ask ourselves, What can I do?

Farther, if we are among the number of those who have been brought to see the vanity of all things here—or if we are of those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, we should feel something of a suitable concern, to make Him known to those who know him not, especially, as doing so will make him still more precious to ourselves; or if we are among the number of those to whom Christ is precious, will we not do all in our power to induce others to put their trust and confidence in that friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Now, it is recommended to you by those who watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that you form yourselves into Missionary Societies, in your different congregations, and that you statedly hold prayer meetings, to implore a blessing on the labours of Missionaries; and no matter whether you contribute one penny a month, or a pound, do it of the ability that God hath given you, knowing that it is accepted, not according to what he hath not, but of that he hath, and God loveth a cheerful giver.

Let a consideration of what God has done, is doing, and may yet do for you, constrain you to be up and doing something for his honour and glory; and may he that turneth the hearts of the children of men, as rivers of water, turn your hearts into the love and the patient waiting for Christ, and induce you to put forth a willing hand to help forward the cause of Missions, to the poor perishing heathen.

To tradesmen, shopkeepers, and merchants, I would beg to ask, do they, in this cause, put the question to themselves, What can I do? When God wanted masons, carpenters and stone-cutters, does He not say that He has given to Moses, for such work, Bezaleel and Aholiab, and with them, in all that are wisehearted, I have put wisdom. And, in Isaiah xxviii. 26., it is declared, of what is generally considered a simple calling, (namely farming) God doth instruct to discretion, and doth teach him.

When you ask, what can I do? I would say, if God keeps sickness and disease far from you, you should, to promote his cause, give some of the gold and silver that otherwise you must give to doctors and nurse tenders, &c. And if He has crowned your labours with success, so that you can say, though my beginning was small, yet my latter end has greatly increased; should you not then remember, who giveth the power to get wealth, and should you not think of him who maketh rich and maketh poor, who raiseth the poor out of the dust, 1 Sam. ii. 8.

And if you have set out in the world, like Jacob, poor and friendless, and a stranger; and if God has given you bread to eat, and raiment to put on; and has kept you in the way that you went, should you not, like him, vow that if he will bring you to your father's house in peace, you will surely give Him the tenth again.—Gen. xxviii. 20, 21, 22.

To another class of your readers, I suppose, I need say nothing, or scarcely any thing; I mean the clergy, as they are in general in our church, what the men of Issachar were of old, having understanding of the times, and knowing what Israel ought to do, 1 Chron. xii. 32. And as the advice has come from them, I trust they will use every exertion among their people, and strain every nerve, so that reproach may not be cast on our quarter of Zion.

The neglect of fasting and prayer, for a blessing on Missionary labours, is, I think, the prevailing sin among our churches. See the value Paul (who was divinely inspired, so that he could not miscalculate) put on the prayers of churches.—Rom. xv. 30, 31, 32; 2 Cor. i. 11.

Where did the agents of the British and Foreign Bible and Tract Societies succeed best last year? Was it not in France? And did not the American Christian Churches specially plead for that land, during that year?—and did not that city, that witnessed the brutal, barbarous, and bloody massacre of St. Bartholomew, (for which his Holiness the Pope went to St. Peter's to sing *Te Deum*,) likewise witness the annual meeting of the Paris Bible and Tract Society. Now, if the pastors and members of our congregations see these things in this light, let them appoint a day of fasting and prayer, for the outpouring of the Spirit on our native land.

Will any not say, that a minister or a layman of honest report, Acts vi. 3, when called to visit the sick bed of a rich neighbour, is doing his duty by recommending that a portion of his abundance should be devoted to missionary purposes. I think if he did not faithfully lay the cause, and the very strong claims of missions before such an individual, in such circumstances, he did not do what he could. Nor is it likely the children of such parents (if they are blessed with them) will be the poorer.

Would such bequeathing not be more likely to make a lasting and useful impression on a man's heirs than any admonition? Suppose a father had left a large, or a moderate sum, to the mission funds—and suppose such a father to have (what too often is the case) a son, or sons, in whose heart the ways of God are not, would not the consideration of his revered father having made the cause of Messiah's glory in the earth, a matter of so much importance, surely it must remain fixed on his mind, that the cause must be good which induced his venerated parent to offer so willingly: and who knows but, by divine grace, he may be brought thereby to consider his own ways, and be wise.

Finally; consider how very soon it will be out of your power to do any thing towards the enlargement of Messiah's kingdom on the earth; and bear in mind, that we must all render an awful account for all neglected opportunities:—and remember, also, that it is not only sins of commission that will be the reason of your condemnation, but sins of omission also. Read what our Lord says, in Matt. xxv. 45, 46—“Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me, and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.”

Newry, Sept. 12, 1833.

A FRIEND TO MISSIONS.

SCRIPTURE SONGS.—No. V.

MATT. viii. 23-27—MARK iv. 35—LUKE viii. 22-25.

Loud howls the tempest round the bark,
 And starless are the skies.
 And o'er the midnight waters dark,
 The mountain billows rise.

All vain is now the helmsman's skill,
 The wretched crew to save,
 As wild they drift before the gale,
 And o'er them breaks the wave.

Their hearts are filled with cold despair,
 No ray of hope appears;
 E'en though their Lord himself is there,
 Their soul is dark with fears.

And now their wild distressful cry
 Bursts loud upon his sleep;
 Save—Lord! O save us, ere the wave
 O'erwhelm us in the deep.

“O weak of faith! why thus doth fear
 Your fainting bosoms fill?—
 Ye winds be hushed—ye waves subside”—
 He spoke—and all was still.

And peaceful as an infant's sleep,
 The sea unbroken lies;
 There moves no breeze upon the deep,
 No cloud across the skies.

And shining forth, the starry host
 Look down upon the scene;
 Now robed in beauty and in light,
 All glorious and serene.

And still when man, weak, sinful man,
 By guilty terrors driven,
 Looks round in vain for peace on earth
 And dreads to look to heaven;

When hope itself is dark and drear,
 As o'er his sinking soul,
 The stormy waves of guilt and fear
 In wild succession roll.

If from the midst of deep distress,
 O'erwhelmed in swelling grief,
 Jesus! to thee, in trembling faith,
 He, cries to send relief.

As erst thy words rebuked the wave,
 And bade the tempest cease,
 So to the tumult of his soul,
 Thy voice shall whisper peace.